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# The Seven Glands: the Immune System

The ancient Taoists understood that the human body could not exist unless there was a continuous supply of energy coming into the tissues and organs. They realized that health was maintained when the energy within the body was balanced and that disease occurred when there was energy depletion or weakness.

Energy is a dynamic force, in constant flux, which circulates throughout the body. Many people plausibly substitute the word *life* for the word *energy* since the essential difference between the two words is so subtle that it eludes all but the semanticist. Each term is vital to developing an accurate understanding of the energy theory as it applies to the body.

For all practical purposes, it can be stated that life is an *indication* of energy

within the body. All that comes to mind on hearing the word *life*—breathing, talking, sleeping, eating, even the ability to read, think, and hear—all these can be achieved only because of the energy within the body. This invariably applies to those functions or activities that are not conspicuously perceptible; for example, the metabolic processes within each single cell could not be accomplished without energy to sustain those functions. Energy is the basis for the apparent solid structures of the body and all that pertains to its anatomy as well. For what is a solid structure such as a bone, except a mass of living cells? All forms and activities of life, both anatomical and physiological, are supported by, and simultaneously deplete, the energy within the body.

We receive much of the energy we need from the food we eat and the air we breathe. However, the body, much like an expensive automobile, must be finely tuned if it is to run properly and utilize this energy to the maximum.

Throughout the centuries, Taoists understood that the body's Seven Glands were the energy centers responsible for regulating the flow of energy within the various systems of the body. These Seven Glands, in descending order within the body, are as follows:

1. The pineal gland, which directly affects the other glands through its secretions and allows one to communicate on the spiritual level. Intuition and conscience are also associated with this gland, which is also called the House of Spirit.
2. The pituitary gland, which governs memory, wisdom intelligence, and thought, is also called the House of Intelligence.
3. The thyroid gland, which maintains the metabolism of the cells in the body, governs growth. It is also associated with the respiratory system. It is called the House of Growth.
4. The thymus gland, which governs the the heart and circulatory system, is also called the House of Heart.
5. The pancreas gland, which helps maintain control over digestion, blood sugar levels, and body temperature, is also called House of Transcendence.
6. The adrenal glands, which support the functions of the kidneys, bones, bone marrow, and spine, may also be called the House of Water.
7. The sexual glands—the prostate and testes in the male and the

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ovaries, uterus, vagina, and breasts in the female—are responsible for hormone secretions, sexual energy and response, and reproduction. It is also called the House of Essence.

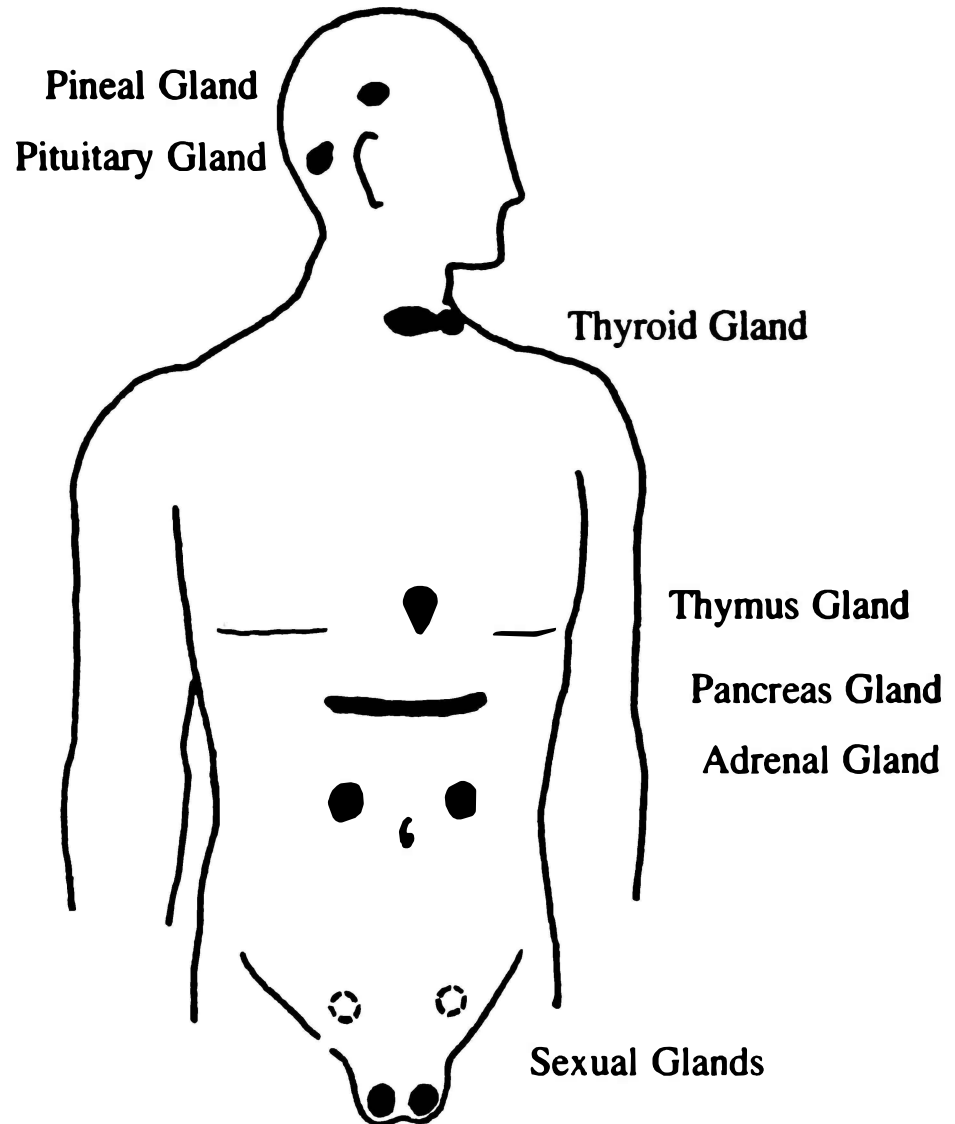


Figure 3. Schematic Location of the Seven Glands

These Seven Glands may be visualized as vessels which are attached to one another by a series of tubes (in reality, these are blood vessels). Each vessel

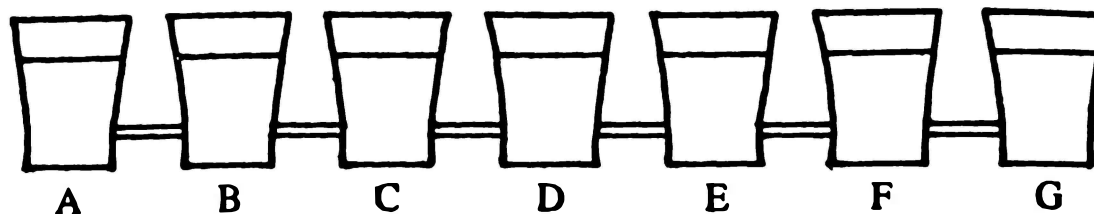


Figure 4. Equilibrium Among Vessels

(gland) is dependent upon all the others for its supply of liquid (energy). If Vessel A (the sexual glands) is supplied with liquid, this fluid will slowly disperse through the tubes (blood vessels) to the remaining six vessels. Similarly, if Vessel C (the pancreas) were to be drained excessively of its fluid through a leakage of some kind, each of the other vessels would give up a portion of its supply to reestablish an equilibrium within the system.

This is similar to the way energy flows within our bodies. A state of weakness or susceptibility to disease arises when one system, or in this case one gland, is deprived of energy for some reason. Our task becomes then one of not only reestablishing the balanced flow of energy to overcome this weakness, but of also stimulating the flow of energy, so that we raise the level of energy within our body to its maximum.

Balancing and raising the energy to its proper level through the Seven Glands system is the Taoist way of strengthening the immune system. Through increasing the energy to strengthen the immune system, we can then reverse our existing weakness and heal ourselves, as well as utilize the higher order of energy to open up our spiritual centers and prevent aging.

Dr. Alexis Carrel, a Nobel prize winner, stated that the glands system was a "wheel of life". If the wheel of life turns smoothly, problems will not arise or interfere with the cellular processes, which are perpetual. Dr. Carrel, from his extensive experimentations, found that every cell was originally immortal. Human beings are therefore originally immortal. Human beings die only because their cellular processes are hindered by poisonings, illnesses, etc. A properly functioning glands system is the key to perpetually functioning cells and immortality.

We need to understand that the Seven Glands support each other in ascending order. If the first six glands are not filled to their capacity, then the seventh gland or House of Spirit will not be filled either. We may quickly realize that if one were to surgically remove one of the glandular systems, a permanent depletion or lack of equilibrium would be created inside the body.

The sexual glands form the base of the glandular complex. This is why,

within the Taoist system of healing, all available routes are explored before surgery (hysterectomy or prostatectomy) is performed, especially if it involves the sexual glands, as these comprise the basic foundation which supports all of the other glands.

- Whether a gland is or is not removed, it is very important to practice the Internal Exercises to provide a continued supply of energy to the body to prevent the person from becoming weakened even further.

The modern term for the Seven Glands is *endocrines*. The endocrines form what is called the endocrine system. Endocrinology is a relatively new branch in medical science, and much remains to be discovered by modern scientists. Yet, the ancients have already furnished us with a great deal of information about the structure, nature, and purpose of the endocrine system and the immune system.

Figure 5. Following page: rubbing of engraving of Taoist longevity symbol, composed of seven calligraphic characters, which represent seven ascending energy centers. Ch'ing Dynasty.

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壽星圖云道通天地

借彼無極但一而厚引

子孫孫如松

子右醇自

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翰林苑檢討

席梧貴顯

龍門四山集持僧入昔棟

通



源家高什  
董京三國書  
劉禹錫錫石

丁巳菊月